



A CONSUMER CONTROLLED COUNCIL COMMITTED TO
ENSURING QUALITY REHABILITATION SERVICES

REPORT OF THE NEBRASKA

State Rehabilitation Council

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) values the input and involvement of all citizens in Nebraska regarding rehabilitation services. All SRC meetings are open to the public and are a great opportunity for the public to voice concerns and opinions.

MEETINGS:

Meeting dates, times and locations are posted on the Nebraska VR web site at www.vr.nebraska.gov

WRITE:

State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson
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State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education

October 10, 2013

To the Citizens of the State of Nebraska:

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to present to you the 2012-2013 Annual Report. The SRC has continued to work closely with Nebraska VR to improve and advocate for employment services for individuals who experience a disability.

Working in partnership with VR, the SRC heard reports and legislative updates from the Director of VR. Reports were shared from the SRC committees, the Client Assistance Program, Statewide Independent Living Council, Assistive Technology Partnership, and the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council.

Among other duties, during the year the Council supported and participated in the following:

- Sixth Annual Senator Luncheon: Hosted by SRC at the State Capitol where Senators and SRC members exchanged information.
- Marketing strategy: New logo with new and innovative ways to market the brand including TV, radio, newspapers, internet, and bus signs.
- Mission Statement: Developing a Mission Statement for the SRC
- Certificate Program: Community College program is modeled after Project SEARCH and is gaining national attention as a pilot project.
- Outreach Focus Group: Piloted outreach focus groups for Latino population and the deaf and hard of hearing population, and received and accepted recommendations from both.
- Survey: Changed the format for the post-employment survey, making the enhanced questions easier to understand and the responses and data received more meaningful.
- Sixth Annual Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards: Awarded and recognized three businesses; also awarded the second annual Alumni Award.

As we look to the future, the SRC and Nebraska VR will continue to work together for employment solutions for our Nebraska VR recipients. I thank the Nebraska VR staff and the members of the SRC for their diligence and dedication to improving the quality of life through employment for those who experience disabilities. Together we can change lives.

Best regards,

Susan L. Gieschen

Susan L Gieschen, Chairperson
Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council

SRC Committee Reports



Lisa Alexa—S. Sioux City

Lisa was a Nebraska VR Counselor in the South Sioux City office. She served on the Client Services Committee.



Mitch Arnold—Omaha

Mitch is the President of Preferred Partners, LLC, an Omaha based recruiting company. He is a member of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.



Barb Benes—Lincoln

Barb is the Human Resources Generalist at Novartis. She served on the Employer Services Committee.



Sharon Bloechle—Omaha

Sharon is the parent of an adult son with disabilities and has been a member of Learning Disabilities Association of Nebraska for over thirty years. She served on the Client Services Committee.



Robert Danner—David City

Robert is a below the knee amputee. He is a small business owner who received services from Nebraska VR. Robert served on the Client Services Committee.

Client Services Committee

Members: Lisa Alexa, Sharon Bloechle, Jaime Galloway, Tim Kolb, Leslie Novacek, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, and Joni Thomas (Chair)

Angela Fujan - VR Advisor

During the past year, members of the Client Services Committee focused on developing services to underserved populations. Focus groups were held across Nebraska with the Latino and the deaf and hard of hearing populations.

The focus groups for the deaf and hard of hearing were held in Lincoln, Omaha, and Kearney.

Some issues that were identified include: the feeling Nebraska VR is not accessible, role of Nebraska VR with employers, and the "grapevine" of information.

To address the issues raised, a committee was developed with deaf and hard of hearing

community representatives, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Nebraska VR. This group will focus on: Exploring the "grapevine", training Staff, identifying roles and responsibilities of each Agency, as well as marketing and outreach.

The focus groups for the Latino population were held in Lincoln and Lexington.

Two issues emerged: First, how the Latino culture views people with disabilities, and trusting Nebraska VR, since they are "Government".

A committee will be created to begin working together to develop a pilot project to explore marketing and outreach activities, accessibility of VR for the Latino community, and training for VR Staff to become more knowledgeable of the Latino culture.



Joni Thomas—Lincoln

Joni is the Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living of Central Nebraska. She served as the Chairperson of the Client Services Committee.

Client Services Committee
Chairperson

Employer Services Committee

Members: Mitch Arnold, Barb Benes, Sue Gieschen, Vicki Newman, Mark Schultz, and April Isaacs (Chair)

Jim Coyle - VR Advisor

The Employment Committee goals were to increase employer outreach, improve resume development, and reach out to additional state senators.

The committee recommended the following to Nebraska VR:

- Invite businesses to review client resumes completed by VR placement staff and make recommendations.
- Creation of an employer database to assist Nebraska VR staff in developing employer relationships.
- Development of a VR marketing strategy to reach out and expand employer partnerships.

April is the Human Resource Business Partner and Recruitment Specialist with Saint Elizabeth Regional Medical Center. She served as the Chairperson of the SRC's Employer Services Committee.

Employer Services Committee
Chairperson



April Isaacs—Lincoln

- Expansion of business sites for Project Search and the Certificate Program.
- SRC members personally invite the State Senator representing the Counsel member's district to attend the SRC's annual Senators luncheon.
- Continuing the SRC's Entrepreneur of Distinction Award and the Entrepreneur of Distinction Alumni Award. Award recipients were chosen by the SRC members from the clients nominated by Nebraska VR staff.



Jaime Galloway—Lincoln

Jaime is a former Nebraska VR consumer and the parent and grandparent of children who experience a disability. He served on the Client Services Committee.



Susan Gieschen—Brule

Susan (Sue) has a son who experiences a learning disability. Sue served on the Employer Services Committee and was the Chairperson for the Council.



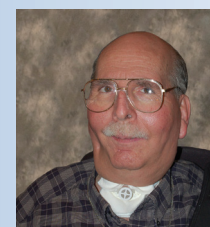
Sherri Kelley—Omaha

Sherri works for PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities). She served on the Transition Services Committee.



Seamus Kelly—Omaha

Seamus is employed at PTI Nebraska (Parent Training and Information for Families of Children with Disabilities). He was a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Tim Kolb—Franklin

Tim was born with a rare form of Muscular Dystrophy known as Werdnig-Hoffman Syndrome. He has been a long time activist on disability issues. Tim served on the SRC's Client Services Committee.

SRC Committee Reports



Vicki Newman—Lincoln

Vicki is a VR client and small business owner. She served on the Employer Services Committee.



Leslie Novacek—Lincoln

Leslie is the Director of the Assistive Technology Partnership. She served on the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Obrecht—Lincoln

Vicki is the Special Education Coordinator for Lincoln Southeast High School. She was a member of the Transition Services Committee.



Kipp Ransom—Lincoln

Kipp is the Lead Counselor on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital. He served on the Client Services Committee.



Vicki Rasmussen—Lincoln

Vicki is the Director of the Nebraska Client Assistance Program (CAP). She was a member of the Client Services Committee.

Transition Services Committee

Members: Robert Danner, Sherri Kelley, Seamus Kelly, Vicki Obrecht, and Gayle Hahn (Chair)

Mark Mason-VR Advisor

The Transition Committee goals were to improve ways to inform parents, students, educators, and partners about Nebraska VR services.

The Committee provided input on the following topics:

- Improving communication with schools across the state with the development of a new Transition Outreach card replacing the Nebraska VR Transition brochure.
- Discussion of the redesign of the transition newsletter now named *Transition Works*.
- Suggesting a dialog with schools and ESU staff to create common expectations of Nebraska VR services.
- Changes in the Juvenile Justice System in Nebraska at a state level and how it would impact youth at risk receiving Nebraska VR services.
- Outreach activities that included targeted VR marketing to VR partners (business, community, and referral sources).
- Developing the Transition training provided for new VR staff members with the inclusion of specific examples of strong VR partnership activities involving a high school and an ESU.



Gayle Hahn—Hastings

Gayle is the Community Work Incentive Coordinator at Easter Seals Nebraska. She was the Chairperson of the Transition Services Committee.

Transition Services Committee
Chairperson

Message from the Nebraska VR Director



Mark Schultz, Director

During the last year Congress has been actively working on reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, which includes the Rehabilitation Act under which Nebraska VR operates. A major part of the discussion has been the need for change within the VR system. Likewise, we have been working with the State Rehabilitation Council to examine the direction of the Nebraska VR program. If we truly want to be

“where your future begins,” do our policies and procedures align with that vision? Do our services meet the needs of who we see coming through our doors today, and prepare individuals for the careers of tomorrow?

The SRC has been a valuable resource as we explore new ways of marketing to increase awareness of our services within the Latino population and individuals who may be eligible for our services but don't see themselves as having a “disability.” SRC sponsored focus groups have provided direction in the types of media used to reach out to those who are unserved and underserved and resulted in an expansion of our use of social media and technology in communication.

Business community representatives have brought real world hiring issues to the discussion and underscored the importance of building mutually beneficial relationships with employers. Their input on the development of our short term community college certificate training has met with great success and has helped us better respond to the needs of business.

As the world changes around us, we will evolve to meet the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities and the businesses in our communities. We will work together with the SRC to truly be “where your future begins!”

*Mark Schultz, Director
Nebraska VR*

Annual Program Costs

	Cost of Program
Administration	\$ 2,682,732.81

CLIENT SERVICES

	Cost of Program
Provided by VR Staff	\$ 11,572,922.98
Purchased from Community Rehab Programs	\$ 1,611,660.46
Purchased from Other Vendors	\$ 6,009,460.03
Total	\$ 19,194,043.47

PURCHASED FOR CLIENTS

	Cost of Program
Assessment	\$ 773,112.07
Higher Education	\$ 1,470,077.45
Miscellaneous Training	\$ 697,210.53
Maintenance	\$ 188,200.75
Personal Assistance Services	\$ 41,396.08
Transportation	\$ 302,709.42
Rehabilitation Technology Services	\$ 1,343,808.46
Small Business Enterprise	\$ 319,947.01
All Other Services	\$ 2,484,658.12
Total	\$ 7,621,119.89

Nebraskans Served by Nebraska VR

CONSUMERS SERVED BY COUNTY

County	Total	County	Total
Adams.....	242	Johnson	10
Antelope.....	23	Kearney.....	37
Arthur.....	1	Keith	30
Banner	0	Keya Paha	1
Blaine.....	1	Kimball	7
Boone	29	Knox	16
Box Butte.....	17	Lancaster	1283
Boyd	8	Lincoln.....	267
Brown	8	Logan.....	4
Buffalo	252	Loup	3
Burt.....	18	Madison.....	349
Butler	49	McPherson.....	3
Cass	38	Merrick.....	36
Cedar	20	Morrill	16
Chase.....	1	Nance.....	15
Cherry	5	Nemaha	18
Cheyenne.....	32	Nuckolls.....	15
Clay.....	26	Otoe.....	35
Colfax.....	27	Pawnee	8
Cuming	36	Perkins.....	8
Custer	60	Phelps.....	17
Dakota	72	Pierce.....	23
Dawes.....	24	Platte	268
Dawson.....	119	Polk	26
Deuel	6	Red Willow	35
Dixon	28	Richardson.....	33
Dodge	155	Rock.....	3
Douglas	1285	Saline.....	51
Dundy	2	Sarpy	216
Fillmore.....	30	Saunders	64
Franklin.....	9	Scotts Bluff.....	186
Frontier	14	Seward.....	51
Furnas.....	11	Sheridan	10
Gage	76	Sherman	12
Garden	1	Sioux.....	0
Garfield.....	16	Stanton.....	20
Gosper	16	Thayer.....	11
Grant	1	Thomas.....	1
Greeley.....	11	Thurston	115
Hall	307	Valley	15
Hamilton.....	26	Washington	37
Harlan	2	Wayne.....	46
Hayes.....	1	Webster	13
Hitchcock.....	11	Wheeler	4
Holt.....	45	York	93
Hooker.....	2	Out of state	21
Howard	20		
Jefferson	30		
		Total Served	6745

FUNDING

Every \$1.00 appropriated for Nebraska VR by the Unicameral earns \$3.69 Federal funding and yields \$4.69 in services to Nebraskans with disabilities.

THE AVERAGE WAGE FOR SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED VR CLIENTS

Average wage for 2013 \$10.98

63% of clients are employed full-time

2013 NEBRASKA VR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Applied for Services	5,677
Received Services	6,745
Successfully Employed	1,887

2013 OCCUPATION & EARNINGS FOR COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED CONSUMERS

Occupations	Percent	Average Hourly Earnings
Service	34.6%	\$8.91
Office Support	14.4%	\$10.44
Sales	11.9%	\$8.83
Professional	9.8%	\$15.31
Production	8.6%	\$11.22
Transportation & Material Moving	7.5%	\$11.41
Construction & Extraction	4.5%	\$11.83
Installation, Maintenance, & Repairs	4.1%	\$12.70
Management, Business, & Finance	2.9%	\$18.32
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	1.8%	\$13.12

Partnerships with Employers & Nebraska VR

SOME OF THE COMPANIES WORKING WITH NEBRASKA VR

21st Century Equipment	FBG Service Corporation	Marianna Industries	St Elizabeth Regional Medical Cntr
AbilityOne	Firestone	Marsden Maintenance	Saint Francis Medical Center
Access Electric	First National Bank	Mary Lanning Mem HealthCare	Sodexo
ADM	Five Guys Burgers & Fries	Menards	Spherion
Affordable Electric	Flexcon	Methodist Hospital	Standard Parking
Amcon Distributing Co.	Fremont Area Medical Center	Mid City Recycling	State of Nebraska
American Red Cross	Good Samaritan Hospital	Middleton Electric	T & L Irrigation
American Security	Goodwill Ind. of Greater NE, Inc.	Mt. Carmel Nursing Home	Tabitha Health Care Services
Apogee Retail, LLC	Great Plains Regional Medical Cntr	Mutual of Omaha	Taco Johns
Associated Staffing Inc.	Hamilton Communication	Neapco	Target
Behlen Mfg. Co.	Heartland Electric	NE Game & Parks Commission	NE Com/Blind & Visually Impaired
Best Buy	Home Depot	NE Machine Products	The Lexington
Bosselman Travel Centers	Home Instead Senior Care	NE Home Builders Assoc.	Tires Plus
Cabelas Inc.	Hormel	Norfolk Iron & Metal Co.	TO Haase
Camaco	Hy-Vee	Novartis	Torin Products, Inc.
Cargill	InfoUSA	NPPD	TravelCenters of America
Cargill Meat Solutions	Integrated Electrical Services	Omaha Steel	Treat America Food Services
Chief Industries, Inc.	Jackson Services	Omaha Tribe of NE	University of NE-Kearney
City of Lincoln/Lancaster County	Jensen Tire and Auto	Oriental Trading Company	University of NE-Lincoln
City of Kearney-Recycling Center	Jeri's Cleaning Service	Pamida	Walgreens
CJ Foods	Katanna Summit	Pizza Hut	Walker Tire
Columbus Community Hospital	Kearney Area Children's Museum	Prairie View Gardens	Walmart Distribution Center
Columbus Hydraulics	Kearney Yamaha	ProPax Corp.	Walmart Stores
Community Action Partnership	Kmart	Rail Crew Xpress	West Corporation
Commonwealth Electric	Lincoln Downtown Association	Ratigan-Schottler	West Pharmaceuticals
Creative Dining Services	Lincoln Journal Star	Regional West Medical Center	Western NE Community College
Days Inn & Suites	Lincoln Public Schools	Reinke Manufacturing, Inc.	Wimmer's Meat Products Inc.
Faith Regional Health Services	Lindsay Manufacturing Co.	Russ's Market	
Farmland Foods/Cooks Ham	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital	Safeway	

Return on Investment for the Nebraska VR Program

On average, a
successfully employed
person **returns \$13.90**
to the taxpayers
for every **\$1 spent**
through Nebraska VR
services.

Average Cost of Nebraska VR Services per Person:	\$11,593.42
Average Annual Earnings after Nebraska VR Services:	\$19,078.49
Estimated Annual Taxes on Earnings:	
Federal Income Tax	\$1,509.07
State Income Tax	\$562.84
State/Local Sales Tax	\$324.25
Social Security Tax	\$2,975.55
Average Total Taxes per Year	\$5,371.71
Average Return to Taxpayers over 30 Remaining Years of Employment	\$161,151.30

Nebraska VR

Client Success Stories



IVY MACKEY

Ivy Mackey is an excellent example of someone who knows the power of positive thinking. Diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome and anxiety, Ivy says she is easily stressed and doesn't like talking to unfamiliar people. Fortunately, she has learned strategies to help her in situations where she feels uncomfortable.

Angie Gangwish, Nebraska VR Employment Specialist, says Ivy has made great progress in gaining self-confidence and in her ability to tolerate changes. This progress didn't happen by accident. Hard work, perseverance, new experiences, and the support of others all contributed to her growth.

Nebraska VR provided career exploration activities and set up job shadowing situations to provide experience in Ivy's area of interest. A summer internship at the David City Banner-Press newspaper provided valuable experience and will serve her well as she pursues a Journalism degree at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. Ivy also plans to major in Music Performance. She plays the flute, sings, and says she may even try out for school plays in college.



ADAN MARTINEZ

Having a plan, setting goals, and identifying services was key for Adan Martinez and his employment outcome. Adan has a traumatic brain injury that effected his learning and comprehension skills. He began working with Employment Specialist Diane Carlson with Nebraska VR. She assisted with assessments, evaluations and postsecondary planning.

Adan began taking classes at Southeast Community College. He transferred to the University of Nebraska - Lincoln where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Education and Human Sciences degree and was awarded Outstanding Senior in Special Education in May 2013.

Adan held several jobs while in school to support himself and his growing family. When working as a paraeducator with students with behavioral challenges, he realized that he wanted to be a teacher. In the fall of 2013, Adan Martinez began his teaching career as a special education teacher at Charles Culler Middle School in Lincoln, NE.



KRISTI PABEN

Anxiety and panic attacks made it difficult for Kristi Paben to be successful in competitive employment. She worked with Nebraska VR Employment Specialist Denise Pettinger to turn her love of cooking into a profitable business.

Nebraska VR and Nebraska Self Employment Services were there to help Kristi develop a business plan and provide help with funding for equipment and other business related expenses. Her business, Ciao by Kristi, in Beatrice, offers homemade "take and bake" food service to the Beatrice community. Self employment allows her to orchestrate her day and keeps her plenty busy.

Kristi was awarded the SRC's Entrepreneurs of Distinction Award in 2013. The award recognized her business profitability and her contributions to the local community. Active in her community as a volunteer, she provides food for a lunch program for low income children, and offers gift certificates for various fund raising activities in Beatrice.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Columbus serves counties:

Butler, Colfax, Nance, Platte and Polk
3100 23rd Street, Ste. 5, Columbus, NE 68601
(402) 562-8065 V/TTY, (877) 505-0866 V/TTY
VR.InfoColumbus@nebraska.gov

Fremont serves counties:

Dodge
827 North D St , Fremont, NE 68025
(402) 727-2900 V, (888) 585-5439 V
VR.InfoFremont@nebraska.gov

Grand Island serves counties:

Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Greeley, Hall, Hamilton,
Howard, Merrick, Nuckolls, Thayer, Webster, York
203 E Stolley Park Rd, Ste. B
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 385-6200 V/TTY, (800) 862-3382 V/TTY
VR.InfoGrandIsland@nebraska.gov

Kearney serves counties:

Blaine, Buffalo, Custer, Franklin, Furnas, Garfield,
Harlan, Kearney, Loup, Phelps, Sherman, Valley
315 W 60th Street, Ste 400, Kearney, NE 68845
(308) 865-5343 V/TTY, (800) 262-3382 V/TTY
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Lincoln serves counties:

Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Lancaster, Nemaha, Otoe,
Pawnee, Richardson, Saline, Saunders, Seward
3901 N 27th Street, Ste 6, Lincoln, NE 68521
(402) 471-3231 V/TTY
(800) 472-3382 V/TTY
VR.InfoLincoln@nebraska.gov

Norfolk serves counties:

Antelope, Boone, Boyd, Brown, Burt, Cedar, Cuming,
Dixon, Holt, Keya Paha, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Rock,
Stanton, Wayne, Wheeler
1212 Benjamin Avenue, Norfolk, NE 68701
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North Platte serves counties:

Arthur, Chase, Cherry, Dawson, Dundy,
Frontier, Gosper, Grant, Hayes, Hitchcock, Hooker, Keith,
Lincoln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins, Red Willow, Thomas
200 South Silber, Bldg. #2, North Platte, NE 69101
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Omaha-Downtown serves counties:

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(800) 554-3382
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Omaha-West serves counties:

Douglas
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(402) 595-1212 V/TTY, (877) 240-4445 V/TTY
VR.InfoOmahaWest@nebraska.gov

Scottsbluff serves counties:

Banner, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Dawes, Deuel, Garden,
Kimball, Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan, Sioux
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